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17 June 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

VIA : Deputy to the Director for National Intelligence

FROM : William Parmenter, National Intelligence Officer for Africa

SUBJECT : Ethiopia: Agency Assessment in Response to Questions Posed
by Mr. Brzezinski

1. Action Requested: That you forward to Mr. Brzezinski the attached assessment of the situation in Ethiopia, with a covering note from you (also attached).

2. Background: In late May, Mr. Brzezinski passed to you a set of questions on Ethiopia which he wished the Agency to answer. Subsequently, in a memo of 7 June, he defined five specific areas of concern that he wished to have included in an "Ethiopian Assessment." The attached memorandum, consisting of a Key Judgments section followed by detailed discussion, is the Agency's response, prepared in the DDI. In brief, the Agency believes that short of assassination Mengistu's regime is likely to survive for some time, and that neither insurgencies nor internal opposition will overturn him. The Eritrean separatists will gain de facto independence, although their longer term prospects are clouded. The Agency is concerned that the Somalis may strike at Ethiopia not only in guerrilla warfare (this is already happening) but in more direct hostilities involving the Ogaden region. Conversely, the Ethiopians over time may try to retrieve their position in Djibouti by an attack on Somalia. Soviet and Cuban assistance to Ethiopia will be important in helping Mengistu hold on, but will not have a decisive near term effect on the separatist movements. Foreign support to the Ethiopian dissidents will not significantly affect the situation; foreign support for the Eritrean separatists will be of significant help to them.

3. I believe that this memorandum answers Mr. Brzezinski's questions to the best of our current ability. I intend to hold an analyst conference to identify those aspects regarding which we feel we could not give as good an answer as we should like, and I will convey the results of this exercise

4. Recommendation: That you sign the covering note to Mr. Brzezinski and forward to him the assessment of the situation in Ethiopia.

William Parmenter
William Parmenter

APPROVED: _____
Director of Central Intelligence

DISAPPROVED: _____
Director of Central Intelligence

DATE: _____

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The Director
Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Zbig:

The attached assessment of the situation in Ethiopia responds to your memorandum to me of 7 June. I believe that our analysts have covered all the questions you posed, and have included other material they believe has an important bearing. Briefly, we think that while Mengistu (barring assassination) will survive attempts to overthrow his regime, the separatist insurgency in Eritrea is likely to be successful, and we are concerned that Somalia may choose this period to attack Ethiopia over the Ogaden. The Ethiopians, on their side, may in time believe they must use force to save their position in Djibouti. We think that Cuban and Soviet help will increase and will assist Mengistu in holding on internally but will not be in time or in such volume to enable him to master the Eritreans. On the other hand, the likely flow of foreign aid to Mengistu's domestic enemies will not assist them decisively either.

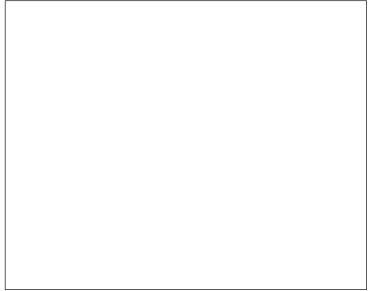
Please call upon us if you have further questions. We in turn will be reviewing our assessment as the situation develops.

Yours,

STANSFIELD TURNER

Attachment 

The Honorable Zbigniew Brzezinski
Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs
The White House

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